

**COVER SHEET**

**Responsible Federal Agency:** U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability

**Cooperating Agencies:** U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries)

**Title:** Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Bangor Hydro-Electric Company Northeast Reliability Interconnect

**Location:** Hancock, Penobscot, and Washington Counties, Maine.

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**Abstract:** A U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Presidential Permit is required before anyone can construct, connect, operate, and maintain an electric transmission line across the U.S. border. On September 30, 2003, Bangor Hydro-Electric Company (BHE) applied to DOE to amend Presidential Permit PP-89 to authorize BHE to construct an 85-mi (137-km) long, single-circuit, 345,000-volt (345-kV) alternating current (AC) electric transmission line that would originate at the Orrington Substation and extend eastward to the U.S.-Canada border near Baileyville, Maine, and continue into New Brunswick, Canada. The currently proposed transmission line is along a different route from that for which DOE issued PP-89 to BHE on January 22, 1996.

BHE states that the proposed transmission line would improve the reliability of the bulk electric transmission system. The proposed transmission line would also create an additional north-to-south transfer capacity of 300 megawatts (MW) and allow a south-to-north transfer capacity of up to 400 MW on a more consistent basis.

DOE has determined that the issuance of an amendment of an existing Presidential permit for this project would constitute a major Federal action within the meaning of the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969*, as amended. The *Federal Register* "Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and to Conduct Public Scoping Meetings and Notice of Floodplain and Wetlands Involvement; Bangor Hydro-Electric Company" was published on November 2, 2004 (69 FR 63514). DOE held public scoping meetings on November 17, 2004, in Baileyville, Maine, and on November 18, 2004, in Brewer, Maine. DOE also solicited written and electronic comments on the scope of the EIS in the Notice of Intent, at the scoping meetings, and electronically through a project Web site (<http://web.ead.anl.gov/interconnecteis>).

The EIS addresses the environmental impacts of the proposed transmission line and the range of reasonable alternatives. Four alternative transmission line routes are analyzed in this EIS (the Modified Consolidated Corridors Route [both BHE's and DOE's preferred alternative], the Consolidated Corridors Route, the Previously Permitted Route [the "No Action" alternative], and the MEPCO South Route), as well as the "Rescission of the Presidential Permit" alternative, under which no transmission line as proposed would be constructed. DOE will use the EIS to ensure that it has the information needed for purposes of informed decision making. The decisions themselves will be issued subsequent to the Final EIS, in the form of a Record of Decision by DOE no sooner than 30 days after publication of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Notice of Availability of the Final EIS, and the amendment to the Presidential permit, as appropriate.